

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ5379

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	COME-00
	INL-01	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOT-00	ANHR-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EB-00	ED-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/012W

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6259  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 003106

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2010  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: EDUCATION MINISTER DECLINES TO PUBLICLY CONDEMN  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

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DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR FOR ROSA WITAKER

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER MAKILA JAMES, REASONS  
1.5 (B) AND (D).

REFTEL: HARARE 3094

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON PRE-ELECTION ISSUES, ON JUNE 7 THE AMBASSADOR AND POLOFF CALLED ON THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CULTURE, GABRIEL MACHINGA. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S CONDEMNATION OF THE TARGETING OF TEACHERS FOR POLITICAL ATTACKS, THE MINISTER CONCEDED THE BRUTALITY OF THE ASSAULTS ON EDUCATORS BUT PROFESSED AN INABILITY TO STOP IT THROUGH PUBLIC STATEMENTS. MINISTER MACHINGA SAID HE PREFERRED TO DEAL QUIETLY WITH THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND AND HAD GONE TO SOME OF THE MOST TROUBLED SPOTS TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION. MACHINGA ATTRIBUTED MUCH OF THE VIOLENCE TO EXTREME POLITICAL TENSIONS AND SOCIOLOGICAL STRESS IN THE RURAL AREAS WHERE TEACHERS, WHO ARE GENERALLY SEEN AS THE POSITIVE CHANGE ELEMENTS, ARE ENCOURAGING A TRANSFORMATION THAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE NOT YET READY FOR. IN ANY EVENT, MACHINGA INDICATED THAT THE SITUATION WAS BEST ADDRESSED INDIVIDUALLY AND NOT "GLOBALLY," AS EACH CASE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS HAD UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES TO BE CONSIDERED. THE EDUCATION MINISTER, LIKE THE HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER, FEEL POWERLESS TO INTERFERE WITH THE STATE-ORCHESTRATED VIOLENCE COMING FROM SENIOR ZANU-PF OFFICIALS, BUT ARE NOT PREPARED TO COMMIT POLITICAL SUICIDE TO DENOUNCE IT.

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END SUMMARY.

2. (C) DURING A CORDIAL MEETING WITH EDUCATION MINISTER MACHINGA, THE AMBASSADOR PROBED WHY SO LITTLE WAS BEING DONE BY SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO STOP THE VIOLENT ATTACKS AGAINST TEACHERS, WHICH HAD RESULTED IN SEVERAL DEATHS, WIDESPREAD BEATINGS, DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTIES, GENERAL INTIMIDATION, AND FORCED CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND TRANSFERS OF TEACHERS. ADDITIONALLY, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT TWO-THIRDS OF OUR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, WHO NORMALLY WORK IN RURAL SCHOOLS, HAVE HAD TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY BECAUSE OF THE INSTABILITY AND ATTACKS AGAINST TEACHERS. MINISTER MACHINGA, WHO HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING A DECENT AND HARD-WORKING MINISTER, ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS WIDESPREAD VICTIMIZATION OF TEACHERS, PRIMARILY IN THE RURAL AREAS. HE EXPLAINED THIS DEVELOPMENT AS A RESULT OF THE PREDOMINANT LEADERSHIP ROLE TEACHERS HAD IN THOSE COMMUNITIES AND THE THREAT THEIR OPEN INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS, PARTICULARLY IN SUPPORT OF THE OPPOSITION, POSED TO ZANU-PF AND MANY PRO-RULING PARTY VILLAGERS. THE MINISTERS CLAIMED MANY YOUNG TEACHERS DO NOT IDENTIFY WITH THE LIBERATION

STRUGGLE TO THE EXTENT OF THE OLDER NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND HAVE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED POLITICAL CHANGE IN THEIR CLASSROOMS. SIMILARLY, RURAL BUSINESS PEOPLE AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS HAVE EQUALLY BEEN TARGETED AS COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO ARE OUT OF STEP WITH THE PEOPLE IN THEIR AREAS OR THE RULING PARTY POSITION, MACHINGA OPINED. AGAINST THIS POLITICAL BACKGROUND, "THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHICH THE MINISTRY CAN ENGINEER AN ATMOSPHERE THAT IS SOILED," MACHINGA ASSERTED.

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13. (C) THE EDUCATION MINISTER, HOWEVER, DISTANCED HIS MINISTRY FROM THE VIOLENCE AND PLEDGED HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAM INTO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM. THE MINISTER TOOK PRIDE IN NOTING THAT ZIMBABWE WAS A PIONEER IN AFRICA IN INTRODUCING SUCH A PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND SAID THAT THE RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST TEACHERS WOULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED WERE THIS NOT SUCH A POLITICALLY CHARGED TIME IN THE COUNTRY. AMBASSADOR MCDONALD RESPONDED THAT THE POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE CURRENT VIOLENCE MADE IT EVEN MORE SURPRISING THAT MACHINGA AND OTHERS WERE NOT SPEAKING OUT IN SUPPORT OF TEACHERS WHO WERE MERELY EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

14. (C) MACHINGA SAID HE PREFERRED TO QUIETLY RESOLVE THE CRISES AT THE MOST TROUBLED SCHOOLS BY GOING TO THE COMMUNITIES TO TALK WITH THE TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY PEOPLE. THE MINISTER SAID HE VISITED 30 OF HIS 6,200 SCHOOLS AND HAD EFFECTED PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS, RESULTING IN TEACHERS KEEPING THEIR JOBS OR TRANSFERRING WHERE NECESSARY. MACHINGA DECLINED TO ISSUE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT ARGUING THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE FUTILE. ANY SUCH GLOBAL STATEMENT WOULD ALIENATE PARENTS BY BLAMING

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	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
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P 091116Z JUN 00  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6260  
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 003106

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THEM FOR THE VIOLENCE, HE SAID. MOREOVER, THERE WERE OFTEN PERSONAL FEUDS AT ISSUE THAT HAD LED TO THE VIOLENCE AND HE NEEDED TO SEPARATE OUT THOSE CASES, THE MINSTER ADDED.

15. (C) THE MINISTER ALSO LAMENTED THAT HE DID NOT EVEN  
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HAVE THE RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE AT ALL OF HIS SCHOOLS AND THAT, IN MOST CASES, THE POLICE COULD ONLY REACH AN AFFECTED AREA A DAY OR SO AFTER THE VIOLENCE. THERE IS ALSO INSUFFICIENT MINISTRY STAFF TO PROVIDE COUNSELING TO YOUNG TEACHERS TO HELP PRESERVE THEIR JOBS AND SO THESE TEACHERS HAVE OFTEN BEEN TARGETED FOR ASSAULT AND FORCED TO FLEE. NEVERTHELESS, THE CABINET DID TAKE A DECISION RECENTLY TO ENSURE THAT ANYONE WHO COMMITS A CRIME IS ARRESTED AND PROSECUTED, MACHINGA INFORMED. THE MINISTER CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER, DUMISO DABENGWA, WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN HIS EFFORTS TO REMOVE THE WAR VETERANS FROM THE COMMERCIAL FARMS, THE POLICE HAVE NOW BEGUN TO ARREST PERPETRATORS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

16. (C) MACHINGA SPECULATED THAT TEACHERS WOULD STILL BE ALLOWED TO FULFILL THEIR TRADITIONAL ROLE AS ELECTION OFFICERS IN THE JUNE 24 AND 25 PARLIAMENTARY VOTING, DESPITE VICE PRESIDENT MSIKA'S STATEMENTS TO THE

CONTRARY. THE EDUCATION MINISTER SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY CHANGE. THE MINISTER SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THINGS WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AFTER THE ELECTION AS ZIMBABWEANS ARE "PEACE LOVING" AND THERE HAD NOT BEEN EXTREME INTER-PARTY VIOLENCE. MACHINGA THANKED AMBASSADOR MCDONALD FOR HIS PERSONAL EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION OF TEACHERS AND PROMISED TO CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATIONS ON THIS ISSUE.

17. (C) COMMENT: THE EDUCATION MINISTER, LIKE THE HOME  
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AFFAIRS MINISTER, AND OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.  
WITH WHOM WE SPOKE ARE EITHER IN DENIAL ABOUT THE LEVEL  
OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OR IMPOTENT TO  
DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. MACHINGA APPEARS TO BE ONE OF  
THOSE MINISTERS WHO IS DISTURBED BY THE UGLINESS OF THE  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE, BUT ACCEPTS HIS LIMITATIONS IN THE  
SITUATION, AND IS AFRAID TO PUBLICLY CONDEMN THE  
PERPETRATORS, WHICH LEAD ALL THE WAY BACK TO STATE  
HOUSE. THE VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AGAINST RURAL  
TEACHERS MAY LESSEN WITH THE DEPLOYMENT OF INTERNATIONAL  
OBSERVERS, BUT IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE, ALBEIT ON A  
REOUCO SCALE. END COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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